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CONGRESSMAN MEEKS

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

GREGORY W. MEEKS  
6TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

November 8, 2007

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The Honorable Kevin Martin, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

I am writing to follow up on a number of letters I have received from constituents who express frustration that they are unable to watch the NFL Network because the cable systems to which they subscribe in New York are unable to come to a carriage agreement with the NFL Network. Many of these letters also note that those cable systems require them to purchase other sports networks as part of the cable package --such as Versus and the Golf Channel-- may not be as widely viewed as that of the NFL network.

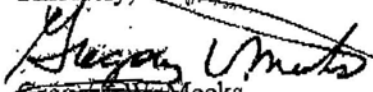
Because of the impact on my constituents, I am troubled by the inability of the NFL and cable companies to amicably work out an agreement for carriage of this preferred channel. I am concerned that in the contract disputes, there has been unfair preferential treatment given to channels owned by the incumbent cable companies rather than other independent channels such as the NFL Network. It is my hope that a carriage agreement can be worked out between the two parties before this season's NFL Network game telecasts begin on Thanksgiving night.

I turn to you since I understand that the FCC has opened a rulemaking proceeding to consider program carriage issues such as these -- particularly as they relate to independent and diverse channels. Although I would hope that this dispute can be resolved quickly preferably through negotiation between the parties, I would urge you to carefully review this dispute if the two parties are unable to do so.

Lastly, I have also seen a number of recent press stories noting that the problem my constituents have identified is not limited to the NFL Network and other sports channels, but that non-sports independent channels face similar problems from cable industry. In addition, some independent channels are choosing to sell themselves to large media holding companies rather than to continue as stand-alone businesses. It appears to be a disturbing trend since this increasing concentration obviously will reduce media diversity, and also consumer choice.

Thank you for reviewing these matters.

Sincerely,

  
Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress